

4. AGE OF SEXUAL MATURITY OF THREE SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY

This note is intended to place on record some observations made at Nandankanan Zoo (Orissa) on the age of sexual maturity of the female of three kinds of wild animals.

Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*)

A Sambar doe born at the zoo on 30. viii. 1968 gave birth to a fawn for the first time on 27. x. 1970 at the age of 2 years, 1 month, 28 days. This was kept along with an adult male throughout this period. Taking the gestation period as about 8 months (Asdell 1964 : PATTERNS OF MAMMALIAN REPRODUCTION, pp. 492-581), the age of sexual maturity of this animal can be said to be not more than 1 year, 5 months, 28 days or say 1 year and 6 months.

The period of maturity recorded for Sambar is two years (Prater 1965 : THE BOOK OF INDIAN ANIMALS).

Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*)

A female Nilgai born here on 13. iii. 1968 gave birth to two young for the first time on 31. xii. 1970 at the age of 2 years, 9 months, 19 days. This female had remained with an adult male throughout this period. Taking the gestation period as 8 months and 7 days (Asdell, loc. cit.) the age of sexual maturity of this female can be said to be not more than 2 years, 1 month, 12 days or say 2 years and 1 month.

There is no mention of the age of sexual maturity of Nilgai in the available literature.

African Lion (*Panthera leo*)

A lioness born here on 26. iii. 1967 gave birth to a cub on 8. ii. 1970 for the first time at the age of 2 years, 10 months, 14 days. This lioness was kept along with an adult lion from 1. viii. 1967. Taking the gestation period as about 108 days (Asdell, loc. cit.), the age of sexual maturity of this lioness can be said to be not more than 2 years, 6 months, 28 days or 2 years and 7 months.

The lioness breeds at the age of 3 or 4 years (Asdell, loc. cit.).

VETERINARY ASST. SURGEON,
NANDANKANAN ZOO,
BARANG (CUTTACK).

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